

The Plan

theological perspectives
for liberation movements
and basic communities.

by BRIAN D'SILVA S.J.

preface by GEORGE M. SOARES PRABHU S.J.



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THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES
FOR
LIBERATION MOVEMENTS
AND
BASIC COMMUNITIES
(a personal faith-rationale)

by

BRIAN D'SILVA S.J.

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RJS-105

F O R E W O R D

In India today, Christians are getting deeply involved in Liberation Movements and in Building Basic Communities of Faith, Justice and Love. This booklet attempts to give a 'rationale' to Christian involvement in building Faith-Justice Communities.

This paper was submitted for defence at the Theology Comprehensive Examination in March 1980, at De Nobili College, Pune. It is hoped that the study guidelines at the end of the booklet will stimulate further thinking towards an Indian Christian Liberation Theology.

Our grateful thanks are due to Fr. George M. Soares Prabhu S.J. for not only writing the preface but much more for his constant inspiration, direction and encouragement, to Fr. Guiseppe Rodrigues and Miss Hyacintha dos Santos for the illustrations and the friends of Seva Niketan for the timely help in bringing out this booklet.

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P R E F A C E

If, as St. Anselm has put it in a now classic definition, theology is "faith in search of intelligibility" (fides quaerens intellectum), every theology will be a personal articulation of the theologian's faith. This does not mean that theology is a purely individual enterprise, the elaboration of one's private fantasies. For no man is an island - least of all the Christian, who finds his Christian identity only by joining to the community of Christ. All Christian theology, then, must be an articulation of the faith experience of the Christian community. This faith experience has found its primal expression in the New Testament, the record of the faith experience of the founding fathers as it were of the community; but it continues to be shaped by the living tradition of a community fully immersed in history and so finding ever new forms of proclamation (always true to the primal experience) in response to new historical situations.

Yet, if Christian theology is a communitarian concern, it is not a collective ideology. For if the Christian is not an isolated individual,

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neither is he (as totalitarian systems of both left or right would like to make him) a cog in a machine, or a cell in an organism. His theology, then, cannot be the parroting of a party line or the mindless repetition of official formulae. The faith experience of the community must take flesh in him and find a distinctive, personal voice that emerges from his personal concerns and speaks to his particular situation. This is what Brian D'Silva has attempted to do in his essay on Theological Perspectives for Liberation Movements. In it he has attempted to spell out a personal vision of Christian theology in terms of peoples' movements towards socio-economic liberation, which lie at the focus of his concern. His theology, therefore, has been formulated in the perspectives offered by these movements, and expressed in a language that will be meaningful to people looking for and working towards such liberation in India today.

Such a theology, obviously, can make no claim to completeness, nor be obsessed with terminological precision. It offers personal perspectives, not an academic summa: and one must not demand from nor read out of it more than it offers. But because these perspectives open on to a

/ and Basic Communities

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highly relevant subject and have been formulated with unusual clarity and power, the essay makes stimulating reading. It brings theology to life in a way which neither the well-worn formulae of theological text-books (worn thread-bare through long and unthinking use), nor the pious clichés of the pulpit (rapidly emptying churches in our increasingly urbanised society today) can hope to do. God is, after all, not quite as dead as theologians have tried to make him!

Like any 'essay', this too is an attempt, not a definite pronouncement with no room for correction or improvement. I myself (probably because of my own professional bias) would have liked to have seen ⁱⁿ it a more explicit use of the Gospels - not indeed as quarries for proof-texts (this would be to succumb to the "theological geometry" which the author is rightly anxious to avoid), but as sources for an encounter with the historical Jesus of Nazareth, in whom a genuine Christian theology of liberation must always be rooted. To any one familiar with the Gospels, it will of course soon be evident how much Brian D'Silva's theology is in fact rooted in the

Jesus of the Gospels, and how much theological reflection and exegetical study underlie the seemingly simple affirmations of his text. The absence of academic paraphernalia must not be mistaken for a lack of theological seriousness, for the essay is by no means light nor exegetically irresponsible. Yet a more explicit reference to the Gospels would, I feel, have helped - if only to allow readers greater access to the author's source, and to encourage them to theologize personally from it.

I would have been happier too if the liberation the essay envisages had been focussed more sharply on the Indian situation, taking into account specifically Indian forms of bondage like caste, and acknowledging the overwhelming reality of India's pluriform religiosity, in all its ambiguity - as the source of a massive legitimization of social injustices, but also as a possible source of prophetic protest for liberation.

But these are, doubtless, other themes for other 'essays' opening out to other perspectives. We must be grateful to Brian D'silva for a fine theological contribution to a significant area of the Indian reality. Emerging from a solid and well-informed reflection on the lived experience of the liberating reality of Jesus and a deep-felt concern for the unlib-erated poor, this lucid and crisply written essay is indeed a refreshing piece of relevant theologizing. It breathes new life into stale formulations, provokes sharp new insights into doctrines that familiarity has dulled . It brings out strikingly the liberative character of genuine Christian theology, and will not fail to illumine and to inspire.

George M. Soares Prabhu SJ

I. I N T R O D U C T I O N

Christians today have begun to take an active part in the liberation movements all over the world. Why has this phenomena 'suddenly' taken place when for a number of years the Christians (with a few exceptions) were on the periphery of any social transformation whatsoever? What has theology to say to this rather recent phenomena and are there any theological perspectives which can enable Christians to give a 'rationale' for their involvement in Liberation and People's movements?

This paper attempts to give a 'rationale' to Christian involvement in Liberation. It is not an exhaustive treatment of the subject because I believe that each Christian, if he is working with a liberation movement, must evolve a theological 'rationale' himself in order to be more authentic both, to himself and to his cause. I have deliberately not given any proofs from scriptural quotations because I believe this quest should not be reduced to a kind of 'theological geometry' but must spring from a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and the values of the kingdom,

and an actualization of that commitment in praxis. This quest, to be authentic, needs a Christological perspective which gives a meaning-system and influences creative reflection on the other theological perspectives discussed here. In other words, it is a search which springs not from an arm-chair theology but from a faith-action perspective where the Jesus-reality of our history is brought face to face with the Jesus-reality of the scriptures.

We start with what I believe is a definition of a People's Movement and then proceed to the Church as a people's movement founded by Jesus Christ proclaiming the values of fellowship, justice and love. From here we discover the celebration of the Eucharist as a celebration of life, creativity, freedom, sharing and love - a celebration of bread for all and a proclamation of light and life in a world of darkness and death. We see the sacraments as the symbolic worship of the community and a proclamation by the community of its struggle and final vindication of the death-dealing forces, leading to the building of the new humanity

Further we discuss who is the God of this community called Church and lastly, the Christological perspective that a community believing in social transformation needs, if the mission of this community is to be the liberation of the total man and the universe.

II. WHAT IS A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT?

CHURCH AS PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT:

A people's movement is essentially an awakening of the people towards a realization of their dignity as human persons. It also involves a striving to acquire this dignity in community, where work and suffering, joys and hopes, creativity and critical reflection are equally shared. A people's movement is animated by the power of love and not hate, even the oppressor is confronted by the power of love and asked to change his life and value systems through the power of love for him, because there is no dignity in the current life and value systems that he holds and believes to be true. Briefly then, a people's movement is a release of creative energies in community to reach that optimum level of human existence that God wishes for every human being. Everyone is invited to reach his/her full, untarnished human potential in a community of love, sharing, fellowship and justice and realise God's dream for mankind.



Church

a people's movement

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Since a people's movement works on the power of love in a community of persons, the question arises : Is there any difference between a people's movement as described above and the Church of Jesus Christ ? The obvious answer is 'No'. The Church of Jesus Christ (I deliberately avoid using the word Catholic/Church for obvious reasons) is a people's movement. According to me the Church is a movement of people, founded by Jesus Christ in order to bring about the realization of the full potential of the human being and thus give glory to God our Father. The Church therefore, stands for values of fellowship, brotherhood, justice and love, which are values that are essential in enabling an individual to reach his/her full human potential. But then, a question could be asked, are not these values human values and is there no spiritual or divine element in these values? The answer lies in the area that these values are both divine and secular and there is no distinction between what is authentically human and the divine. The authentic human person is a free point of self-giving and to the measure he loves, he is

divinized. Thus there is no difference between what is authentically human and divine.

To go back to our original statement. The Church is a people's movement, founded by Jesus Christ in order to bring about the realisation of the full potential of the human being and thus give glory to God the Father in and through the Spirit of Jesus when it realizes the values of the kingdom in its life.

The Church therefore, consists of a Spirit-filled people, animated and inspired to live their lives according to their founder Jesus Christ. It is therefore a definite group of people who have a specific aim and purpose in life. This aim and purpose is not only individual salvation but also includes the transformation of the world and the oppressive structures because the Church stands for fellowship, justice and brotherhood. We cannot answer today like Cain "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen.4,9b). As a result of the incarnation we are our brother's keeper in helping one another to grow towards a better human being, thus leading finally to the hominisation of man and the universe.

The Church is people. It is a community of creative, free, joyous sharing people. It is a community where life is present in its fullness because the fountain-head of all life - Jesus - is the founder and the energising force behind the people.

It is a community of creative people in whose company there is no curbing of the potential of life. In it there must be the free expression of all that is beautiful in humanity. It is a creative community in the sense that it makes people grow. It is a community in which the spirit of Jesus is breathed upon you making you grow. There is no threat to one another in this movement. You are not a threat to me so that I put up my defenses, but rather, because you are there together with me, we grow. This is the meaning of the Spirit of Jesus is breathed upon you and this is a gift shared not only among the people of the community but among all mankind because the essence of this movement and the message of the founder is to LOVE and SHARE. By loving and sharing with all mankind, the community of people are able to bring forth a new man and a new woman who enter into the banquet of the Lord Jesus.

The community called Church is a people who cherish freedom because freedom is human and gifted to mankind by the Father. Therefore, any and everything that smacks of 'unfreedom' has to be condemned as something dehumanising and evil. It has to be called by its name 'sin'. In carrying out this denunciation, the people of God, guided by the power of love perform their prophetic function to the whole of mankind. Together with this prophetic function the consequences of this denunciation must be joyfully borne because the denunciation releases creative energies to bring forth a better and new humanity. Thus there is joy in suffering only if and when, the suffering is for the building up of a new and better man and woman and not otherwise.

The people of God are a free people. What does this mean today ? Can an individual really be free? Psychologists tend to think 'no'. But it is the mystique of the followers of Jesus to say 'yes'. This is not pure idealism, rather it is a sign of non-conformism with what the world has to offer. I say I am free because my freedom comes from Jesus

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Christ who broke his body for my freedom. I say I am free because the God I believe in, is a God who has entered into my history displaying his 'characteristic' of freedom. Therefore, by saying I am free, I stand as a non-conformist to the present slavish temptation of our present consumer society.

Every release of creative energy and realization of freedom-experience bring with it the experience of joy. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a Gospel of doom. It is a Gospel of life and growth, of freedom and creation, of love and sharing and of the joy of being human. What does this 'joy of being human' mean? It means a certain joyful acceptance of the fact that I am, that I exist, that there is no one like me in this whole wide world. The Father himself has been directly responsible for my creation and He has sent me into the history of mankind just as he sent His Son, with a mission. He has given me the whole of creation to respect and to love and to satisfy my needs. It is the joy of realizing the brotherhood of man - that I grow because of the name given to me by my fellow-human-beings. It is the joy of realizing that we are no threat

to one another, but we build one another into the mighty fortress with Christ as the corner-stone, against which any dehumanising force cannot stand, but is transformed by the dynamic energies of love. The joy of being human is the wonderful feeling of an experience of self-giving, of sharing, of forgiveness and reconciliation. It lies very deep within us and requires the Spirit of Jesus to draw it out for us, so that we are able to create the new man and the new woman according to the image and likeness of God.

The Church is a sharing-people. Why? Because God shares his love and his forgiveness and His Son with us. He has shared the whole of creation with us and gifted it to us to make of it a beautiful and loving world. To share in love does not in any way limit my dignity as a human being, on the contrary it enhances it, because we are born of the Father who is love and sharing. How can any authentic human existence ever go against the intrinsic urge to share, which is the birthday gift given to us by God? And yet it is so. The forces of Evil seemed to have triumphed in the short-run and have laid the world

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to degradation and pauperism of a large majority of people as against the accumulation of wealth, power and prestige by a relatively small minority of people. To this appalling state of affairs the people of God stand as a beacon of light, a protest against the darkness of the dehumanising influences. It is in this sense that Jesus Christ wanted us to be the 'light of the world' and the salt of the earth.

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III. THE EUCHARIST : A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

It is therefore, not suprising that the symbol that the sharing people took to represent their ideology is the Eucharist - the symbol of love and sharing. In this light the Eucharist is a protest activity it is a subversive activity against all the dehumanising forces that are at present operative in the world. The Eucharist stands for creativity, freedom, joy and sharing. It stands for an egalitarian society and strive to achieve it by its immersion in the world, by its taking what is so common a thing like bread and proclaiming that this is to be shared by all the human beings in the world.

The Eucharist denounces the present process of structural exploitation and accumulation of wealth by a few. It denounces private property and class and caste differences. It denounces the selfish use of natural resources by some people of the world at the expense of the others. It denounces the power politics of the people in authority and demands that each person has the right to determine his/her destiny.

The Eucharist proclaims, on the other hand, the beautiful gift of life and growth as received from the God of life and encourages the people of God to pledge themselves to transform the unjust structures of exploitation into structures that unite and heal and not fragment and break the family of man. The Eucharist proclaims the liberation of all men from everything dehumanising because it was instituted, we believe, by the man Jesus who offered his life for the total liberation of man. The 'Do this in memory of Me' is the request of the founder of the Jesus-people to follow in his foot-steps, to make the options he made, to speak out boldly against slavish adherence to cultural patterns, religious traditions, political domination, economic enslavement and social control.

It is the 'call' sent out by Jesus to his people to rise up against anything that suppresses life and growth and create the new man and woman - the new humanity where the goods of the earth and the culture of the race is shared by the whole family of man.

The Eucharist is a celebration of life and love and therefore, it fits well within the framework of a meal - a banquet. The Eucharist is a celebration of life, the life of millions of people who have struggled, sweated and toiled to make up the bread which is consumed and eaten as a sign of taking into/purselves their life, identifying with them in their blood, toil, tears and sweat. It is the gift of the poor, the down-trodden, the margined, the unschooled who gift themselves to us in the form of bread, they break themselves for the whole of mankind in bread, they therefore, share with the whole of mankind their love and concern to make mankind grow towards it fullness and that is why they are "the blessed of the Father" because they live out in their blood, toil and sweat the commands and values of the kingdom here on earth.

What is our response to this tremendous offer of friendship in love, of the poor and the down-trodden ? In the face of such generosity and sharing, such love and concern, I believe, there can be only one response : LOVE: JUSTICE IN ACTION. This is our pledge we make to the

poor of this earth that we will identify ourselves with them and transform the world together with them, so that we can grow together, we building them up and they building us up to the pinnacle of human glory. It is in this sense that every gift includes a task, every offer of friendship in love demands a reciprocal response, every sharing of blood, toil, tears and sweat, demands pledging of our blood, toil, tears and sweat to create the new humanity of love and concern.

Therefore, in this sense the Eucharist is a meal leading to growth in life and a 'sacrifice' involving a pledging to work for the transformation of dehumanised structures, the liberation of man and the building of God's kingdom on this earth.

The Church therefore, with its people who are creative, free, joyful and sharing and together with its living out of its Eucharistic pledge, is the 'salt of the earth', a worthy bride and follower of Jesus Christ. It is only when she lives authentically according to her calling that she will be in a position to proclaim to the world the Good News of her Lord Jesus Christ who was raised to the heights because of his options

... whose options found the approval of the Father. It is only when the Jesus-people strive might and main to build a better humanity by being non-conformist to the dehumanising and alienating forces, by living out their commitment radically, by 'doing this in memory of ME' then it can say we are the children of the Father who lets his sun shine on the good and the bad, it is only then that we can rightly hear the words of the Lord, "Come, enter into the blessedness that I have prepared for you". (Mt.25,34).

Growth within community



Eucharist

celebration of life

IV. ESCHATOLOGY (new life)

What is this blessedness that has been prepared for us? It is here in our history. We do not know at what time or where it will take place, but because of the incarnation and the disruption of the divine into our history, we can be sure and dead certain that the blessedness spoken of will take place in the history of mankind. Salvation history is therefore, salvation in history. It is the task set and given to every human being to transform his world around him in the here and now. What does this transformation imply? It implies 1. A radical re-structuring of our values according to the kingdom values and 2. A prophetic role on our part to challenge, protest and denounce anything that has a dehumanising element. This will bring serious consequences but they can only be joyfully borne and shared if the Spirit of Jesus Christ has already trained and helped us along, with our brothers in community, to accept them. This we believe because it is the promise made to us by Jesus Christ - that in the time of trial, words will be put into your mouth (Mt.10,19-20) then why do we hesitate to make a radical turn over to the side of the kingdom and transform the world.

One of the strong elements of this blessedness here on earth is that it has to be striven for in community. There is no place for individual salvation and gain here. I cannot be happy when I see my brother damned. This is against the spirit of the Jesus-people. Therefore, salvation is communitarian. The mission of Jesus and the Church is precisely this: to build the human community as God has dreamt of it, but to build it here on earth. What 'earthly' use can there be to build a human community in 'heaven'? It is today quixotic to think in such terms, the human community has to be built here on earth. If it was a matter of individual salvation then Hinduism and not Christianity has a better answer and a well thought-out system. This was done years ago, much before Christ came into the history of man. Jesus comes with this new demand and challenge, he demands that human beings on earth form a community where life begins to be lived in a new way, where there is a new strength and a new vitality, where human beings throb, glow and grow with the brightness of creativity and joy and any power that stands contrary to this new life and thwarts it will

be swept away by the power of God and Man, so that man will be able to reach his original, untarnished human existence. This is the vision of Jesus.

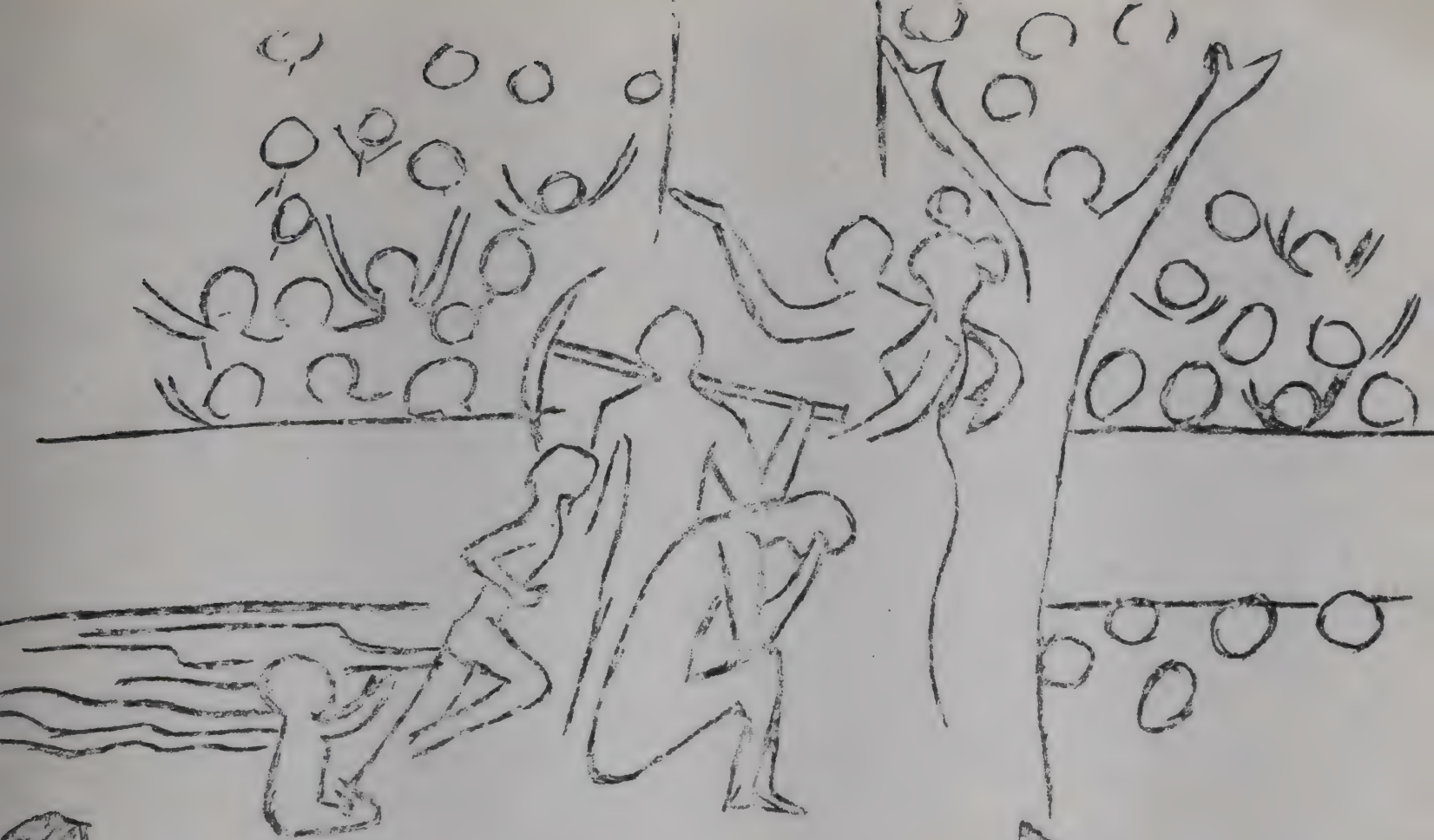
Thus the truths that he spoke about, like the Trinity, the Eucharist, the sermon on the Mount, his own death and resurrection, the promise of the spirit, all these to be of value must be in relationship to the group life of people, to their earning, buying, working, self-understanding etc. These truths therefore, have political and social dimensions here on this earth and not in some ethereal space 'out there'.

Thus I believe, we cannot speak today of a 'beyond-eschatology'. Our eschatology looks to the future but it takes seriously the present and tries to realise the future in the present. This tallies with what Jesus Christ said, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel." (Mk.1,15). This was his obsession and he challenges us to make it our own. We can only legitimately spend our energies therefore, firstly in believing this truth and secondly, in collaborating with God as co-creators to transform the world into a

beautiful place where men live as brothers, where sharing and not 'grabbing' is the hall-mark of the day and where men will sing and dance and relate to people in warmth and friendship, in the positive and creative activity of building one another and the community of man on this earth. This ultimately means socialism, we must want it and believe in it. Then it will be possible where the goods of the earth and the culture of the race will be shared by the human family, where everything and everybody always,

"Seek to give a response to another: the rain to the earth the earth to the plant, the plant to the animal, the animal to the person, the person to one another, the whole human community to God and God to human kind.

This is the whole cycle and it perishes the moment self-giving is stopped and self-centeredness enters. We see therefore, that every gift is a task, for everything received demands to be passed on, to become a gift." 1.



Sacraments

growth within community

IV. SACRAMENTS - Introduction

In the perspective where every gift is atask, the 'sacraments' of this community are expressions of a response from one person to another. They are a symbolic expression of the love and acceptance of the community to the individual person who either seeks to enter and pledges to live by its values or a strengthening in love of persons who are already in the community - a strengthening to grow in the life of love and the spirit of Jesus. The sacraments are not merely symbolic expressions which cater to the aesthetic dimension of man, but they are also an expression of how a community which has opted to live by the values of Jesus Christ and especially the value of life, carries out its functions in the ordinary everyday events of life in a world torn apart by hatred, self-interest and competition.

BAPTISM - At the very begining of a Child's life when the child has left the warmth and affection of the womb and is exposed to the jarring and glaring harsh reality of life, the child needs, atleast for sometime when

he/she can stand independant on his/her own feet, the warmth and acceptance of his/her fellow-human beings. This community then, which is an enfleshing of the power of love extends its welcoming arms to the child rejoices at the gift of God, as one more hand in the task of the transformation of the world from the death-force of evil. It rejoices also at the birth of new life, as once more a confirmation by God of the ideals it holds and believes to be true. It rejoices in the innocence of the child, the spontaneity and the joy of a new borne babe. It rejoices in the fact that there are no differences in children no class, caste or colour barriers and the child shares everything he/she has with people he/she loves. In all this the community rejoices and joyfully accepts the new-born babe in its arms giving it the warmth it needs and the affection it seeks after the traumatic experience of birth.

All that is said above can be equally applied to an adult who seeks to enter the community and pledges his life to the carrying out of the mission of this community. Baptism is therefore, societal and

and communitarian. It is not restricted to any one sect of religion, but it can be extended to the whole race of humankind (ofcourse, if they want it) when they make a pledge to follow the values of justice, love and concern.

CONFIRMATION - I believe confirmation is the answering of a deep need in a person when, because of the stress and strains of life, because of the constant bombardment of the death-dealing forces, a person needs to feel the solidarity with the community that he/she is in, and confirmation, answers this need for togetherness and strengths against the alienation and isolation that a person may experience in life. It is the community again giving new life to weak individuals who may begin to entertain doubts about the efficacy of God's salvific plan for humankind.

Secondly, confirmation is also given at a time when physically an adolescent does not really know where he belongs. He is surely too big to be considered a child and too young yet to be considered an adult. He feels estranged from the people he once knew and loved

and he begins to experience a loneliness, an alienation, a frustration and at the same time, he begins to discover himself and others and some of the discoveries can be shattering and devastating. This is where the community comes in to embrace him with its oil of gladness, with its offer of friendship and its concern for one of its own. Thus confirmation, like baptism, is societal and communitarian. It takes seriously the life and growth stages of a person and tries in a symbolic form to express its response to the person who feels estranged. In doing it encourages the young sapling into maturity, it comforts and soothes the brutal sores that the competitive world has inflicted on the young and it safe guards them against aggression of the death-dealing forces of evil.

EUCCHARIST - A memorial of the death and ressurection of Jesus Christ and a celebration of life in the sense of warmth and a release of creative energies to build human communities of love and self-reliance also a pledging to work for the transformation of the world into a family of brotherhood and love as a response to the gift of the poor to the family of man (as discussed above.)

RECONCILIATION - However high may be our ideals and aspirations, it is a fact of experience that man always falls short of them. The sacrament of reconciliation is therefore, the sharing of the spirit of forgiveness, a spirit which the community has freely received from the Father, to be shared among the members of the community : or the community as a whole who fall short of the ideal that it stands for. It is only when there is a constant set back and a rising to go forward that the community of the sharing-people can still believe in the gift of forgiveness of the Father and the options that the Son made for the poor of the world. The death-dealing forces being what they are and exerting such a devastating influence on a person who opts for change, it is not surprising that persons in the community or the community as a whole will fall short of the ideal they pledge themselves to, here the spirit of love and concern becomes operative to counteract the death-dealing forces and accepting those who have fallen short of the ideal, back into the warmth and friendship of the human community.

The question of reconciliation therefore, in the light of what has been said above, arises when sin is seen in its societal sense and its consequences are felt in the community of humankind, when self-centeredness creeps in and asserts itself, when my brother becomes a threat rather than a gift to me, when I close myself from the strengthening energies of the others - and all this happening because the death dealing structures are exerting an evil influence on my life and choices then reconciliation counterchecks the life-destroying tendencies and the reconciliation and warmth that I receive from the very same people who have perhaps been the victims of my selfishness, brings me back to my senses and offers me an extended loving hand of friendship and love. This reconciliation is a societal and a communitarian act demanding heroic detachment and the ability to discover the good even in a 'sinful' person and to extend the invitation to grow anew into the new humanity of fellowship and love.

PRIESTHOOD

THE HIDDEN GOD

A Challenge from an Asian Sage

"Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads.

Who do you worship in this lonely dark corner of the temple with all the doors shut?

Open your eyes and see that God is not in front of you.

He is there where the farmer is tilling the hard ground and where the labourer is breaking stones.

He is with them in the sun and in the rain and his garment is covered with dust.

Put off your holy cloak and like him come down on to the dusty soil.

Deliverance ?

Where will you find deliverance ?

Our master himself has joyfully taken the bonds of creation, he is bound with us forever.

Come out of your meditation and leave aside the flowers and incense,

What harm is there if your clothes become tattered and stained?

Meet him and stand by him in toil and in the sweat of your brow."

Though the above poem can be addressed to anybody, I feel it specifically addressed itself to the priest - and the priesthood understood as cultic. In today's world, a community dedicated to the values of the Gospel cannot afford the luxury of a priestly caste or class having only cultic functions as their contribution to the world. What then is the priesthood in the community of a sharing-people?

Priesthood, I believe, is one of the expressions in which the community called church expresses its radical following of the demands of the Gospel. As in any human organisation various functions are needed for the smooth running of society, so also priesthood satisfies one of these functions. But it is a function demanding a change of heart and mind-sets, a change of values and judgement, a change of attitudes and behavioural patterns and 'the' criterion for all these changed systems, is the values of the kingdom.

A priest is essentially one who serves and serves in all types of work according to his ability and training. He is chosen by the community to be their president at their symbolic expressions of faith -

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though this choice need not be permanent - and he is also chosen by the community to be their link with the other communities throughout the world. In essence he should try to personify in his life the radical demands of the Gospel. In doing so he does not and cannot demand privileges and respect. He only builds the community together round the spirit of Jesus Christ acting as its inspirational force.

In the vision of Jesus Christ for a better world the priest is the one who by his calling must share in order that every social gulf may be removed. He opts for a kind of life that will reverse those trends of thought and upset those value systems that have made a mess of our world, created the wretched and the dispossessed, fragmented the human community and brought about the present global malaise. A priest, in a true sense, should want to reverse these conditions and dynamite it at its very core by infusing in the heart of the very corrupt system new blood and new life by his style of life and his value system. Priest in the community must have the courage to be pure, to lay

emphasis on being rather than having possessions, to have the sanity to relate to one another as brother and sister, as neighbour, and not as master and worker, brahmin and harijan.

To be a priest means to be human, to be tender - this means that the powerful must be made to care for the powerless and the powerful must be made to be at the service of the powerless by sharing power. The priest has to be a visionary like Jesus to dream this impossible dream.

The priest has to be the shining lamp, the bright spark and flame in a world of selfishness, darkness, cruelty and death. To be a lamp in the night means to be a non-conformist to the darkness. It means saying 'I do not agree with the majority.' Yet the darkness will press on the priests who have the courage to be different, they will be oppressed, beaten and burnt-out. But we have the assurance of the Risen Lord that the light will shine in the darkness and the darkness will not comprehend it nor overcome it, nor master it. (Jn.1,5).

What has been said above of course, applies to each and every individual who opts to belong to the Jesus-people, and not to the priest alone - But the priest cannot help but be otherwise, by the very nature of his life as priest he becomes the inspirational force and model figure for the rest of the community and challenges them to an on-going experience of life, love and concern.

For the priest, a top-priority of his work consists in the celebration of people, of brother and sister. For it is only in the co-relationship of people to people that God can be met and properly worshipped. People are God's sacrament to people and God's self-revelation to people. The priest therefore, brings into the community this thrust in the direction of brother and sister who is God's sacrament and in whose service will he discover the real God. His whole thrust and mission is in the building up of the brotherly community. Thus his ministry is essentially life giving for God is life and the principle of our existence and our humanity. Again we see that priesthood is not cultic but ministerial, societal and communitarian. It is in the building up of the 'broken for you' body that the main work of the priest consists and

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at rejoicing at every growth and extension of life, love and concern, towards the new humanity.

MARRIAGE - When two people pledge themselves to one another and gift themselves to one another there is the creation of a mini-community of love and concern, and for the community of the sharing people this is perhaps the best expression of its values and its ideal. The sacrament of matrimony is therefore, the enfleshing of the kingdom values in a world of hate and misery, in a miniature scale, because here the saying every gift is a task becomes very real in the life of these two young people. They together shoulder the burden of the transformation of the death-dealing values and encourage one another to go through life with zest and energy. Together with this there is also the hope expressed that humanity will live on and grow to reach its zenith point of union of hearts and minds.

What stands out in bold relief in the marriage of two young people is their daring and courage to go ahead with life in the company of one another. They together proclaim the unity of mankind is possible and it is not just a dream, that sharing is a viable reality and not a fantasy

of cinderolla land, that love ultimately has great energising power to transform and live one's life to the full, that in the very meeting of two or more people the divine is incarnated and helps to discover from within the beauty of love and concern.

Here again we see that marriage is societal and communitarian. The sacrament has a message both to the community and to the married couple, and the message essentially is LOVE, LIVE AND GROW into the new humanity of self-gift and self-reliance.

ANOINTING - This is the community's farewell to its fellow-worker, an act of solidarity and oneness, an act of friendship and love to the sick one or at the point of death. It is the approval and the acknowledgment of the community to the sick man that he has 'run the race' in the right spirit - the Gospel values - and he has done his bit to transform the oppressive structures. In this sacrament the community pledges to him/her that his/her work was not in vain- that they will carry out what he/she lived by and continue from where he/she has left off.

Here the community also expresses its protest to the world of misery - that the death-dealing forces have been overcome and the resurrection is at hand, the in-breaking of the reign of love has begun and hate will be overcome. It expresses its hope and it acclaims its right choice of working together with God to transform the world from hate to love - this choice has not been in vain, the marginalized will rise up when the values of the Gospel become operative in the history of man and the goods of the earth are shared by all.

Thus we see that this sacrament is also one of life and joy. It is a celebration of a life lived to the full and joy because love has triumphed. It is an encouragement to those of the community to continue in the values they have opted for because the fruits at the harvest are great. It is a thanksgiving sacrament for having lived a 'good life' and an exciting sacrament because it comes at the threshold of a new life as the 'son of God'. The task is over and the gift remains a pure gift all along. The contribution towards

the new humanity has been complete and man must go now to a well - deserved 'blessedness' and new life, where the happiness as children of God will be experienced in full measure.

CONCLUSION - It can be seen that all the sacraments are the symbolic expressions of the values that the community holds namely, creativity, sharing, joy, and love. They are societal and communitarian and some like the Eucharist and Reconciliation extend to being political. They have a protest-value against the present system of exploitation and alienation. They act as lamps shining in the darkness, as non-conformist with the values of the oppressor class and as proclaimers of the ultimate triumph and mastery of life over the death-dealing forces. Their function in the community is to strengthen and vivify the community, unite and harmonize the rough edges and gather together in one continuum the family of mankind to work as collaborators with God to transform the world from hate to love, from selfishness to sharing, from despondency to creativity and from death to life.

VI. GOD:

A number of questions have been posed about God and are still being posed by each new generation . Is God needed? Why? Who is this God that hovers over us? Who is this God who commissions us to transform the world? Why must we do it ? etc.etc. Many answers have been attempted but at the background of every answer there is a lurking suspicion that it is not the fullest and the best answer, there is something lacking, some point that has not been considered, some statment to be clarified. In the age that we are living in, this is an obvious reaction when dealing with the question of God. Science and technology has conditioned us to have clear-cut and precise answers and we transpose these conditions or aspirations on matters relating to God.

To me this is wrong methodology. Why? Because God is a mystery - he is too deep for me to understand fully and what we can only attempt are inclinations, tendencies that can guide our thinking and evoke a positive (or negative) response towards God. We can never get a real and precise answer to what is God? and who is He?

God is a mystery. We do not meet him in daily life as we meet one another, we do not know how he looks or how he reacts. We can only at best give utterance to our faith in him and even here language proves a draw-back because of its societal, cultural, historical meanings and limitations. From my experiential knowledge I can come to the conclusion that I am a gifted person. I was gifted life and all its qualities, and experience leads me to say that I was gifted life in great love. I did nothing to earn that love and I cannot therefore, say that I have acquired it. I was given it unconditionally and this is the basic quality of my self-apprehension.

This 'giftedness' of my life is an experience of unconditional love and life. God becomes then the love and life principle of my life. Experience tells me I cannot live one second of my life without his constant love and life. This I experience and sense as I grow in my ability to experience myself as a community being. Someone has called

me and given me myself and the more I become aware of this gift of myself from the others, the more I sense and experience the unconditional love of God. Thus the community that I live in and the degree that I grow in life and love is the degree of God's self-revelation to me made in and through the community. The community of love and brotherhood therefore, reveal to me the love and life principle that is God, wherein there is no love and brotherhood in the true sense, God's self-revelation is blanked out and the death-dealing forces take over and corrupt the light of love and life. Thus one of the basic and very fundamental needs to fight the death-dealing forces and allow the love of God to shine over human beings and foster their growth, is the realization and the actual working out of the community of love, justice and brotherhood among humankind.

Although the love of God and life from God is gifted to me, yet it is not done in paternalistic way. The gift implies a task and God will not do my home-work for me. He invites me to become co-creator with him in his eternal task of re-building and transforming the world.

My 'createdness' is then raised to creativity and I am invited, not coerced, for my own growth towards a fuller human being, to activate my creativity in transforming the world. It would not be wrong to say that the more I am creative the more I become more fully human and free, the more I work at the level of creative love in building up a better humanity, the more I will grow in the life and power of love.

This leads to the next idea that God is communion and society. It is only in communion, in meeting with people, in mutual acceptance that God is encountered. By this I mean that if I live my life in such a way that I rejoice in the other's greatness, promotion and happiness and I actively seek opportunities to make the other more than he or she is, then I encounter God in my life and discover the beauty of being called human. This 'characteristic' of God is very essential to people who live as a community of human beings working with one another for social transformation, because with this understanding of God people become God's sacramental sign to one another - they help and build one another into better human communities. This is the dream that God has for human

beings and he expects us to make this dream of his come true. Thus in the community of sharing there cannot be any person who is an active threat to my growth and life, who activates the dehumanising forces against me and dwarfs my self-growth. This individual needs a radical transformation and a thinning out so that the dehumanising forces which he activates by his behaviour to others are stopped once and for all, by the power of love. God then will enter in his life when he wants and accepts him as he encounters people who encourage him to grow and gift themselves to him as God has gifted them to themselves.

God is also experienced as sharing. God shares with me his life, love and forgiveness and this again is in total absence of my qualifying for them. This experience of God sharing his life, love and forgiveness is sensed in and through the community that I live in. The sharing community thus reveals God as sharing to me when it behaves in a similar manner, short of which the experience of God that I receive will not be one of shared love and forgiveness. As a result of this aspect of God,

the community can justify its stand on fighting that the goods of the earth and the culture of the race be shared by every human being, that the world be transformed and the dehumanising self-centered structures be demolished for humanising and self-giving ones, that the principle of life, love and forgiveness which we have received from God be shared among all human beings and no one has the monopoly of it. Further from this aspect of God one can say that the task which arises from the 'giftedness' of life is a shared task, not one man alone is called to transform the world but the task belongs to everyone who believes he must live his life to the full. Responsibility is thus co-operate and collective. It is the human family working out the transformation together with God, following the example of Jesus Christ and under the influence now of the Spirit of Truth and Love.

God is therefore, Love, Life, Community and Sharing but these aspects are a later experience of man in his awareness of the God-dimension in his life. The earliest experience that we as Christians

have of God's in-breaking into our history is the experience of the God of the Exodus where God stands out as a Liberator and Defender of the cause of the poor, and the oppressed. He has "seen the affliction of his people who are in Egypt, and has heard their cry because of their taskmasters".(Ex.3,7ff) and he takes a political stand against the established ruling power to liberate his people. The God of the Exodus experience is a God fighting for man in order to free him from bondage. He is a God who builds a people, who nurtures them and leads them on to fuller participation in his life and love. He has close dealings with his people, and he trains them to bring about a revolution in the thinking about God for their time.

The God of the Exodus is the God of Liberation, the God of life who frees his people from the death-dealing forces. God as we have experienced him is LIFE and his wish for us is LIVE, ARISE, GO FORWARD. He is LIFE and therefore, whenever he addresses people or ~~crüpts~~ in the history of man he brings life. He can never say Die, Cease to Exist. This is against his very nature as the God of Life. To one

and all them God says LIVE and this being so, our behaviour must reflect this command of God to LIVE and live a full life of love and hope, of shared bread and forgiveness, of human creativity and joy in the enrichment of the other and the building of the new world.

The God that the world needs today is an experiential God. The intellectualization of God is over and done with. God has to be de-intellectualized and humanised - by this I mean that God and my experience of him must influence my behavioural patterns, my value systems and my personal relationships with others if he has to have any meaning in my life and that of others. My God is therefore, my experience of him through the love of others. He is firstly a 'mystery' beyond all 'exact, precise' comprehension. Secondly he is love and life encouraging us to grow at our own pace and gifting himself continually to us so that we may gift ourselves to others and rejoice in their consequent growth. He is communion and society where the brotherhood of man reveals the communion of God and finally, he is sharing where the Love, Life and Forgiveness are shared, where bread is shared among the brotherhood, where creativity is fostered because of freedom and where

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... where ... forgiveness is given more than demanded because of love. This is the 'image' of man that God made into his 'likeness' and our mission is to rebuild that image.

VII. CHRISTOLOGY (Jesus Christ)

The Christology presented here is the 'rationale' for all the theological perspectives that have gone before, because as the Christological perspective changes, to that degree the ecclessiological, liturgical, missiological perspectives change. It is with this in mind that I have not given rationalistic arguments to provide proofs for the previous theological perspectives mentioned above.

The starting point for any Christological reflection is the historical Jesus, that man from Galilee, a man in our history and the history of the whole human race. There are two striking aspects of this man, that is, the man among men and the man at home with God. My reflections will attempt to spell out these two aspects.

The man among men

As a man among men he strikes me as one who had made a definite choice and option for the poor and the oppressed. He is against the rich class, yet he deals with the individual rich men or men in position.

He does not hate the individuals, but the class of the rich who are slaves of an oppressive system. He identifies himself with the poor, in the sense, that he has no room at his birth, no food of his own, but lives on the food that people give him, he has no security on which he can be rest assured that he will have a comfortable life in his old age. He was a man who drew others to himself by the power of his words and his deeds, yet he would always leave others free to do their own thinking and never impose his decisions on others. He tried to make the future present in the here and now. He did not live on the events of the past, but he was future orientated and lived as if the future, i.e. the kingdom was already in the present. This led him to believe in the goodness of human beings where he would not condemn them according to their sins of the past but give them their true value as human beings to live out their bright future which is ahead of them. (Adulterous Woman).

Jesus was a man who disregarded public opinion and respect when it came to his uncompromising stand about the freedom of man against all forms of oppression. He dared to challenge and question the existing oppressive status quo. In doing so he exhibited his tremendous freedom and fearlessness. He was a strong non-conformist to any tradition, custom, myth that enslaves, as he had a clear vision of what the future of the human race should be. In this sense he was a visionary. Thus he was also able to build people by giving them trust, freedom and forgiveness and a sense of the divine in them, allowing them to grow in their own creative way. In his life this was possible because he put human beings above customs habits, taboos, religion, society and politics. People mattered more for him and he was able to die for the cause that he began his work, viz., the liberation of the human race from all forms of oppressive domination. To do this he evolved a methodology of strict non-violent action, in his concept of the freed humanity even the perpetrators of the oppression have to be treated with love and not hate because they are also children of the Father.

Jesus was not a man who was a slave of history rather he was a creator and maker of history. He spoke the language of the common people and he was at home with the outcast of society. He treated them with warmth and understanding, giving them a chance to live as human beings and not cogs in a machine of exploitation. He was a creator of his own values which were guided by his vision of the future and he hated enslavement of human beings, yet the slave and the enslaver had a special place in his heart.

He fought against power vested in the hands of a few because he believed that each person has the power to make his own destiny and has the right to make his own decisions, thus that power should be in the hands of the people and not in the hands of a few dignitaries at the top. From this perspective he worked for the transformation of individuals and structures thus as an animator for the peoples' cause and a changer of the existing value system. To do this he had to be uncompromising with his convictions and himself, yet he was patient and understanding but not patronising towards others.

The Man at Home with God

He called God Abba and his relationship with God was one of a filial nature, he had a strong sense that he was the son of God and that God had called him to do his will on earth and especially to bring about the liberation of man. He loved God's creation and believed with a child-like trust in the promise of his Father, not only did he believe them, but he believed that the promises of his Father to the people had already taken place and that the kingdom of God had already come. From this experience he drew tremendous strength to carry on his work for the liberation of man. He gave to the world the beautiful experience of the loving, Merciful, Forgiving Father whose love has no limits. Jesus loved God in man and man in God. Therefore the will of the Father was everything for him even superseding his own young life.

Jesus was a man who fully believed that God loved everyone in a like manner and therefore, he could speak of a salvation that is communitarian, bequeathed to mankind and the world. In this world there

cannot be a situation where I can be happy if I am saved and yet be unconcerned if my brother is damned. His obedience to the Father's will stands out as the high point ~~as the high point~~ of his life. He saw the Father's will to be the liberation of man and this co-incided with his own ideals and thoughts about man. Thus he was raised to be the Son of God and the Lord of Creation.

CONCLUSION

The man Jesus living today with India's poor, in a village, unheard of, probably working like the rest of them even as a casual labourer and making them realise for themselves that they are not the ignorant fools, the useless, the unlettered, the lacking initiative people that the oppressors make them to be, but that they are the wise, the creative, the risk-taking, sharing people that made the Father want to be with them and so initiated a process of structural and individual change by announcing through Jesus Christ his reign of freedom for all that is very best in humankind. To the world, this Jes

makes sense, to a world of rampant oppression, power seeking, wealth accumulating and inhuman exploitation - Jesus stands out as a figure who dared to contradict these enslaving values to make human beings free and live according to their calling with the values of justice, disbursement of power, equal opportunities for all things and positions and fellowship in the human community called to be creators of their own destiny together with God the Father and the rest of mankind as their brothers.

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VIII. FURTHER QUESTIONS

This brings us to asking the question, why did God raise him? There were other men who fought before him for the liberation of their people. What about them? The answer seems to be in the line that his options found the approval of God. His option FOR the poor and the oppressed, for building up the human community to its full potential, all that he expressed in the kingdom - were in keeping with the plan of God and his love for the whole human race. Thus this man Jesus who gifted himself to God and to man totally, was raised from the dead to show that the death-dealing forces could not and cannot have power over a person who makes the options that Jesus makes, and ultimately the death-dealing forces crumble in the face of the actuation of the power of love.

The Gospels understood this message of the resurrection and tried to depict it in many symbolic ways such as entering a room with all the doors closed, the appearances and disappearances, the trans-spatial appearance etc. They seem to say that this is a human type of existence,

not the one that we are familiar with, but another type and of another degree and all of us who work for the liberation of mankind from the dehumanising forces will be 'raised from the dead' like Jesus.

With this understanding of the resurrection of Jesus it is not suprising to understand how later Christological reflections transformed the Jesus of Nazareth into the Christ of Faith. By this I mean that Jesus of Nazareth who lived out the options he made for the poor and margined and fought against the dehumanisation of man by the death-dealing forces, and finally triumphed over them, could not be therefore, subject to them (Col.1,15-20). He became the Lord of Cosmos, the Son of God, the First-born of Creation and the only Saviour of the world. Of course these developments took time but in the period of two decades (Martin Hengel: Son of God) after the death of Jesus this Christology was already developed.

Martin Hengel goes on to say that the "inner consistency created a need for a more developed Christology because :

1. The question of the relationship of Jesus to the intermediary figures like angels, Wisdom, the Torah etc.
2. It becomes necessary to re-consider the meaning of salvation in Judaism, temple worship, Torah and its relationship to the exalted Son of God.
3. The certainty that the time of fulfillment had dawned, provided an impulse to a change of attitude towards the Law of Moses. The true will of God was not in the teaching of Sinai but in the teachings of Jesus - the Messiah. Even the Exodus saving was referred now to Christ and his saving work.

Jesus was the Exalted Son of God - coming to judge again and the eschatological awareness of the early Christian Community, made them think that this is possible. Only when one who has control over the beginning has the whole matter in his grasp. The beginning has to be illuminated by the end and ultimately the idea of pre-existence was a favourite means. The Jewish idea of projection back into primal

times came into use here to develop the pre-existence of the eschatological redeemer. (Micah 5,10 or Ps.110,3).

Once the idea of pre-existence was introduced all the functions of Wisdom were transferred to Jesus. Therefore, he became mediator at creation and salvation. "Only in this way was the unsurpassibility and finality of God's revelation in Jesus of Nazareth expressed in a last conclusive way".²

The above gives a description of how Christological thought developed. Today we believe Jesus is pre-existent, he is divine, he is the Word who became flesh. What does this mean today?

Jesus is pre-existent not merely chronologically but qualitatively. God conceives of Jesus' existence first - an untarnished human existence. In him all other human existence are conceived. Therefore, he is the first-born of all creation. His existence then is all love and not non-love and we exist in this love. He coincides with God's essence which is love. He is what God is. Therefore, he is divine and also untarnished human existence as conceived by God. Thus pre-existence is therefore, a theological phrase and not a temporal one.

This love becomes flesh (sarx) - and this love which was interior to God from all eternity becomes the human expression of God's love for mankind and takes on a human form. Jesus is therefore, the expression of the way God loves us. Jesus in his being is not imprisoned in himself, he is free for others, welcoming, supporting, sharing. Therefore his message,that you love one another as I have loved you".(Jn.15,12)

We believe that Jesus is truly divine because he belongs to the same sphere that God is which is love, and he is truly human because he is not imprisoned in himself - he is a free point of love and self-giving. This is authentic human existence. Therefore, in the measure that we grow in authentic human existence, as a free point of love and self-giving, in that measure we are 'divinized' and realize our original, untarnished human existence. We realize the love of God in the degree of self-gift. It is on this basis that the Christian must reach out to others, gift himself, to the others to increase in the realization of his full human potential which, when completely reached, will be equal to the 'born of God.' Thus in the measure that we live out the values of Jesus in the total gift of self - in that measure we will be 'sons in the Son.'.

Yet a further problem emerges, viz., if Jesus has conquered the death-dealing forces by the resurrection from the dead, then why are we still faced with the power of Evil?

The answer lies in the direction that the kingdom is not fully present in the world. Jesus initiated the process of the triumph over the death-dealing forces but his task is not yet complete. His body is still broken and it is left to his disciples and his followers who believe in the values of justice and freedom of all humankind from the bondage of 'sin', to continue the building up of his 'broken for you' body. It is here where our task lies in continuing the work of Jesus so that he can present the authentically humanised creation back to the Father who initially created it as fully human and fully divine.

IX. CONCLUSION -

It is in this sense, as we build up the community of mankind to be creative, alive, joyful and fully liberated, when the goods of the earth and the culture of the race will be shared by all, when the marginalised begin to live in the main-stream of life and the powerful serve the powerless by sharing their power, when the powerless are empowered to create their own destiny of peace, fellowship and justice. It is only then that the task of Jesus will be complete and the kingdom of God will reign in all its might and splendour and the power of sin (evil), the death-dealing forces will be vanquished once and for all, never to raise their head again to trample and tarnish humanity. Then Jesus will present the kingdom to the Father, to be enjoyed by all men, to the glory of man becoming fully human in the all-embracing power of God's love.

1. Rayan, Samuel: The Holy Spirit Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 10545, M 1978, pg. 139
2. Hengel, Martin, The Son of God : Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1976 pg.67-72

X. STUDY GUIDELINES

I. Introduction

1. What do you understand by 'Social transformation'?
Give an instance to convey what you mean by it.
2. Is social transformation same as social service ?
3. Does social transformation depend on a 'change of heart' in the individuals involved? Is such a change of heart possible without social transformation ?

II. Church: a People's Movement

1. What do you understand by a People's Movement ?
Are you acquainted with any such movement ? How does it function.
2. Should the Church be a people's movement? Why? What practical steps could you take to make the Church in your locality a people's Church?
3. What should be the role of the Church as a people's movement in a non Christian milieu?

III. Eucharist:

1. What does the Mass as it is celebrated today mean to you in the light of this chapter?
2. 'Eucharist stands for an egalitarian society, bread shared by all human beings.' How could this idea be conveyed in the Mass today? What would be the concrete implications in the daily lives of the believers?
3. How could we make the Eucharist a meaningful celebration of life and love in the context of a meal?

IV. Eschatology (New Life):

1. Spell out this 'New Life' or blessedness offered to us in concrete areas of our existence ?
2. How does this New Life make us co-creators with God here on Earth?
3. What do you understand by Heaven?
4. 'Salvation is communitarian' - what would this mean to you, its implications in our dealings with others ?

V. Sacraments:

1. What do you understand by Sacrament in the light of this chapter?
2. Evaluate critically the administration of the sacraments today in the light of this understanding.
3. How would you visualize the work of a priest in building up the New Humanity? How would his work be different from yours?
4. How is the priest related to the community?

VI. God

1. What does God mean to you?
2. What does God mean to the people around you (Make an informal survey and draw up a concept of God operative in your locality).
3. Is it possible to describe God adequately in human language?

Different religions give us different glimpses into the mystery of God. Discuss.

VII. Christology (Jesus Christ)

1. What is the idea of Jesus conveyed to you through your catechism classes and the sermons preached?
 2. Compare this with the idea of Jesus that comes through the Gospels.
 3. What does Jesus mean to you now?
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